JFK
Assassination
FORUM

Number 34
June 1979

Kennedy 'victim of gangsters'

PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S assassination was probably the result of a conspiracy involving organised crime, according to a leaked version of a report by the Assassinations Committee of the American House of Representatives.

The committee's report is not due out until next month, but, according to NBC News, a final draft "does not prove, but discusses in great detail, how and why individual members of organised crime could have arranged the murder.

"The committee will say President Kennedy was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy," NBC said. "It will explain its conclusions that an acoustic analysis of the sound of the shots makes it highly probable two gunmen were shooting—even though three of the committee's 12 members questioned the acoustics evidence."

STRONGEST EFFORT

The network said the final report would say that organised crime's battle with John Kennedy and his brother Robert dated back to the McClennan anti-rackets hearings of the 1950s. Later, the Kennedy administration, with Robert as Attorney General, brought about the strongest effort ever against organised crime.

"The report names Carlos Marcello and Santo Trafficante as the most likely organised crime bosses to have been involved," NBC said. "It provides evidence, some of it inconclusive, that they and Teamster leader Jimmy Hoffa threatened John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy or both.

"Further, it suggests associations through which they could have influenced accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald or Oswald's killer, Jack Ruby."

Both Marcello, underworld boss in New Orleans and Dallas, and Trafficante, one-time underworld boss in Cuba, denied involvement, NBC said.—UPI

With sincere apologies to patient subscribers, here - at last - is a belated Issue No.34. Sorry to have taken so long to re-appear after the February publication but we can blame the apparent lack of news and developments as related to the JFK case, and the empty promises of the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

Their interim Final Report of 2 January 1979 stated that it was anticipated that their entire Final Report would be published by 30 March 1979. It was therefore decided to defer our next issue to fully cover this momentous publication but that date, and another deadline, 1 May 1979, passed by without any tangible result. As the short "leaked" article, which appeared in the (London) Sunday Telegraph for 3 June 1979 would suggest that we will, in fact, have to wait until July for the HSCA's verdict this issue of JFK.AF will be rushed out to prove that it is still in existence! It will include "bits and pieces" of information gleaned over the last few months, but is generally devoted to the printed word with information of books and articles etc which you may have missed and not be aware of. Hopefully, next month, it will be "business as usual" with reactions to the news from Washington?

Since the muted cries of "conspiracy!" at the end of 1978 comparitively little has been heard from Messrs Blakey, Stokes & Co. We are therefore indebted to our fellow-researcher, Edgar Tatro, for this account of Louis Stokes in action in Boston:

" On Monday, 19 March 1979, Representative Louis Stokes, the Chairman of the HSCA, lectured at Boston University and it is clear that his greatest blunder was allowing a question and answer period. Although I could not attend since, ironically, I teach a course on the JFK assassination Monday nights, I did send a former student, Jim Coughlin, to get the lowdown and according to him, the method of avoiding pertinent questions by means of side stepping gobbledygook, is still alive and well and living in Washington.

Apparently Mr Stokes' fovourite pastime was a feeble attempt to assure the audience that most of the questions that he couldn't answer himself would be answered in the Final Report by a horde of nameless, faceless experts and scientists.

Despite this convenient way to hide his ignorance, Stokes did manage to put his foot (at least, up to his knee) in his mouth on several occasions. He informed his captives that CE 133 A+B, the notorious yard photographs of Oswald, were legitimate pictures, and that again, it was the

sensitivity of the Kennedy family which prevented the Autopsy photos from being released. However, this was trivial pabulum of what was to follow.

Stokes, as expected, resurrected the stench of CE 399, the magic bullet, but he added a new wrinkle. He explained that CE 399 was pristine in shape because "it only hit soft tissue". This incredible remark indicates more than ignorance; it exposes blatant dishonesty and sheer stupidity. When Mr Coughlin appropiately pointed out that CE 399 is credited with shattering John Connally's fifth rib and traversing his right wrist, Mr Stokes then suggested that the scientists knew more about this subject than he did. Frankly, how could they know less! Keep in mind that Officer Charles Harbison and Nurse Audrey Bell had testified before the HSCA that a number of fragments had allegedly been removed from Connally's wrist.

Stokes was also asked about Emilio Santana's testimony before a New Orleans Grand Jury in which he confessed firing two shots at President Kennedy from the Dal-Tex building on November 22, 1963. Stokes had no knowledge of this material at all. Santana's veracity is not the issue, but Stokes' ignorance of a well-known character in this scenario is amazing.

Alas, we come to grips with the comment of all comments. Mr Stokes claimed that there were no ties between Jack Ruby and the Mafia. According to Stokes, Ruby was a "buffoon". I guess Al Capone, Paul Dorfman, Paul Rowland Jones, Paul "Needlenose" Labriola, Jim Weinberg, Dave Yaras, Lenny Patrick, Barney Baker, Dusty Miller, Irwin Weiner, among others, should be considered no more than circus clowns!

I think it is dramatically obvious who deserves the epithet of "buffoon". "

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In reaction to our inclusion in Issue No.33 of Blakey's "freudian slip" it was suggested from a certain quarter that the "blacking out" of the details of the addressee was the bad sight of the month.

There was no nefarious reason on our part - it was merely because of the fact that we didn't have the time to obtain Jeff Hoyle's permission to reprint and it was not our intention to cause him any embarrassment.

Here, therefore, is an unexpurgated re-run - with his blessing!!

We only aim to please.....

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Select Committee on Assassinations
U.S. House of Representatives
3331 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, ANNEX 3
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

November 21, 1978

Mr. Jeffrey P. Hoyle
56 Lockewood Circle
Swansea, MA 02777

Dear Mr. Hoyle:

Thank you for your letter of October 17, 1978, and for your interest in the work of the Select Committee on Assassinations.

Let me assure you that the comments raised in your letter have been brought to the attention of those people directly involved in the assassination of President Kennedy for their use.

Since the Committee's inception, the comments and suggestions of concerned citizens such as yourself who have taken the time to write have been appreciated and given us interesting issues to study.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

G. Robert Blakey

G. Robert Blakey
Chief Counsel and Director

GRB:jl

JFK
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Number 32
January 1979

If the two photographs below, which were published in the 15 January 1979 issue of Newsweek, depict Messrs Blakey and Stokes as somewhat dumbfounded and nonplussed, it is probably because they were as surprised as the rest of us, including the critical and research community, were, when the House Committee announced a conspiracy verdict in their Interim Report on the JFK and Martin Luther King assassinations!

Blakey, Stokes: A case for conspiracy

At this stage we cannot comment too much on this bombshell and must await the Final Report. The 600-page Report and up to 40(!!) volumes of evidence, exhibits and scientific analysis is due to be published about 30 March. We will include all details, ordering information and costs etc. just as soon as we are advised.

It is impossible to believe that last-minute evidence by acoustic experts Weiss and Aschkenasy turned the Committee around. We were informed by reliable sources that, even as late as mid-December that they were headed towards a lone-assassin conclusion to their two-year probe and that massive segments of their Final Report had, in fact even been written BEFORE their Public Hearings into the JFK assassination commenced last September. What changed their minds to such a radical extent?

Ed Tatro's following article is an excellent examination but bear in mind two important points before becoming too estatic at the recent news. (1) The Committee have recommended that the inquiry into the true facts behind the Dallas murder now be handed over to the U.S. Justice Department for their action. If Robert Blakey is "rewarded" for his recent efforts as Chief Counsel to HSCA as the successor to Griffin Bell as Attorney-General he will AGAIN be in charge of any new official investigation. How about that?? (2) As the Committee have seemingly cleared of implication in the JFK assassination, any government agencies, the Soviet and Cuban governments, Organized Crime and anti-Castro Cuban groups, just who does that leave as the possible assassins?

Of course, as Richardson Preyer (Chairman of the JFK Subcommittee) and the (London) Observer columnist Laurence Marks have pointed out - the Dealey Plaza ambush could "be a conspiracy of two lone nuts."

Enough said - for the moment!!

AN OVERVIEW OF THE HSCA PUBLIC HEARINGS

by Edgar F.Tatro

Although my occupation has not allowed me to keep as vigilant a watch on the House Select Committee on Assassinations as I would have liked,

I saw, heard, and read enough to obtain an overview of what took place and I didn't like it. If it were not for the diligent and meticulous acoustical experts, Dr Weiss, Ernest Aschkenasy and Dr Barger, and their efforts, the Warren Commission would have been almost totally reincarnated, give or take a few lies. At any rate, all members of the "critics", big and small contributors, deserve an apology from the government, the media and all those closed-minded, allegedly patriotic, but actually gullible and blind individuals who derided us and threatened us by various means for years. Since little has been truly developed that various critics hadn't already determined before, I, for one, wouldn't accept it anyway, but out of a burning, self-righteous pride, I'd like to hear a mass apology.

Where to begin a diatribe directed at the HSCA is difficult, since there is so much to criticize (even before their report is published). The cursory examination of Commander James J.Humes, who conducted a medical "fiasco" which was politely termed an "autopsy" and the lack of extensive ballistics tests to demonstrate that CE399, the magic bullet of the even more mythical and absurd single bullet theory, was even remotely possible, is absolutely inexcusable and unforgiveable for all time.

The friendly treatment of Commander Humes was an indication of another Warren Commission trend into which HSCA would trap itself. As its predecessor, the Congressional investigators, whether conscious of it or not, divided witnesses into friendly and unfriendly camps. Humes was merely toyed with for ten minutes wheras individuals such as Dr Cyril Wecht and Dr Mark Weiss, whose testimony indicated conspiracy, were relentlessly interrogated for hours. Dr Wecht, who in my opinion was treated more like a criminal than a Forensic Pathologist, didn't crack under the pressure, so he was merely ignored. Instead of allowing logic and common sense to prevail over the medical evidence, a popularity vote of eight to one decided the issue for the Committee. The Acoustical experts, fortunately, couldn't be ignored or dismissed, although a Chicago firm gave it their best effort to challenge those findings, but failed to do so.

On the other hand, "The Umbrella Man" - allegedly, L.Stephen Witt - was trusted beyond belief. The Committee believed, in fact, that he was "The Umbrella Man", believed that the umbrella he presented to them was the same one in question, and believed his far-fetched, albeit possible explanation for his actions apparently without any substantiation to support any of his contentions. Now, I have no opinion as to the guilt or innocence of "The Umbrella Man", but I do not appreciate the superficial manner with which he was treated. I found Representative Stokes' feeble attempt at humour when he suggested that the umbrella be pointed away from himself when it was opened for display as distasteful. If Witt had employed an umbrella gun on November 22,1963, would he have been stupid enough to bring it with him to Washington? If the umbrella was a visual coordination signal to others, what would opening it now prove? This was intended to be a mature investigation into the assassination of the President of the United States, not a cartoon carnival.

If the parading of the alleged "Umbrella Man" before the public was an attempt to "get the critics", such a practice is also distasteful, and downright disgraceful. Robert Cutler, key author of the umbrella research, has steadfastly analyzed and researched this case for many years. The "critical community" should be applauded for turning over every rock and inspecting every scintilla of evidence, not ridiculed if one concept does not hit paydirt. Would it have been wise to ignore the possible ramifications of such an odd character with an umbrella in 65° weather on a sunny day? Finally, I vehemently deplored Stokes' praising of Witt as if he had performed a great duty for his country and contributed to the investigation when just minutes before he had candidly admitted that he would not have voluntarily stepped foward even if he had known they were

looking for him. Stokes' praising of a man for obeying a legal subpoena can only be compared to the plastic compliments dished out every day on Hollywood's bland TV talk shows.

The one aspect of the "Jmbrella Man" scenario of which I did approve was his photograph being published by the mass media as a last ditch effort to identify and subsequently subpoena him. As a rule of thumb, such a method might be dangerous, but fifteen years have passed us by so it was a "nothing ventured, nothing gained" proposal. I don't understand why photos of other potentially key unidentified figures were not published for the same purpose. Why weren't all the unknown mystery men, some arrested, some not, of that day, published along with the "Umbrella Man's" photo? Unless there are some solid leads privately available - (I do know of two such cases!) - I can't comprehend why only the "Umbrella Man" along with another photo and one composite drawing were isolated. Was that just a propaganda game?

There are many other things that puzzle me about this Congressional Investigation. I don't understand how the eight forensic pathologists who essentialy support the Warren Report were selected and how they could legitimately support those conclusions. I do know that some of these men have close associations with previous government panel medical judges. Regardless of their motives, Dr Cyril Wecht made a shambles of the single bullet theory and properly chastised the Committee for the absence of new ballistics tests, properly performed this time. I don't understand how forensic pathologists, Dr John Nichols and Dr Charles Wilber, who have both published irrefutable medical evidence citing conspiracy, cover-up and possible fabrication of medical materials, could be ignored.

Likewise I question why I should trust the ballistics experts brought in, when I know other experts, who are equally qualified, who adamantly disagree with these officials who were allowed to testify. I question the validity of the Neutron Activation Analysis by Dr Vincent Guinn. Harold Weisberg's cricicisms of Guinn's previous connection to the original investigation are sound. I also question if it is convenient that the Tague curb scar, which has long been suspected as another assassin's responsibility, no longer possesses sufficent metal for testing. It appears that the old ploy of stacking the deck was displayed in full force again.

I am curious to know why Sylvia Duran, the key witness as to whether Oswald ever visited the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City, did not testify. We now know that the Mexico City phone tape was NOT Oswald's voice. We have known since the beginning that the Mexico City photos were NOT Oswald's mug, but the face of a still-unidentified man. Critics have reasonably questioned the possibility of an Oswald impersonator or impersonators. The fingerprint, body scars and height discrepancies, and even Hoover's documented suspicion mandate that Sylvia Duran be heard. Can any of us be sure that Oswald is in Oswald's grave? I figure he is there, but wouldn't it be nice to know and not assume?

I can't believe that the HSCA can rule out any organization as conspiring to kill President Kennedy, particularly since they can't name another gunman. Such reasoning is absurd. The intricate labyrinth of names an associations pertaining to this case and other political crimes exposed by Peter Dale Scott, George M.Evica, Robert Sam Anson and others is overwhelming. How could any committee make such a naive statement and consider itself honest and rational? Stokes admits that the CIA, the FBI and the Secret Service did a lousy job, but that there was no deliberate cover-up. Will someone please define "deliberate" for me? Orwell's "two plus two is five" has come home to roost!

A few other points of wonder come to mind. I wonder why the Committee

felt the motorcyclist "accidentaly" left on his Channel One button. I wonder if the wayward Police motorcyclist who left the motorcade route has been ignored. I found Chief Counsel Blakey's hypothetical conclusion, based upon not even a shread of evidence or testimony, that Robert Kennedy destroyed his brother's brain and brain tissue slides, absolutely incredible. It's amazing how these people only accuse the dead!

I wonder how any sane member of that Committee thinks they have satisfactorily answered all the questions pertaining to all the untimely deaths of the last decade and a half by showing that the 100,000 trillion to one odds that these deaths were of an innocent nature was an inaccurate compilation. That was the greatest piece of statistical gobbledygook I have ever heard in my lifetime. Either investigate the particular murders in question or just plain shut up. Numerical fallacious arguments prove nothing and waste valuable time, money and manpower.

I wonder if all the materials submitted to either Representative Gonzalez and/or former Chief Counsel Richard A.Sprague, who both resigned, made it to the appropriate hands when Blakey took command, assuming one might call him "appropriate". I wonder if Image Enhancement was performed on the photo and blow-ups showing a man-like figure holding a rifle-like object on the grassy knoll south, the knoll across from the famous one, which I twice sent to the Committee. The figure was discovered by diligent researcher Emory Brown. I wonder how the Committee can still justify their case against Lee Harvey Oswald, if they have carefully inspected the palmprint, the paperbag, the curtain rods photos, the perch photos, the ammunition source, the postal receipt discrepancies, the Givens' story, the Riva modification rifle source, the notorious Oswald photos, ad nauseum. Was the dedicated and prolific work of Harold Weisberg, Sylvia Meagher, Mark Lane, Josiah Thompson, Fred Newcomb and others simply buried at the outset?

I realise that government cannot investigate the government. Leon Jaworski is three time losing proof of that. However, I shiver at the possible depths of this committee's conflict of interest. Mark Lane recently stated on Radio that Representative Dodd was a law partner of the former FBI Head, L.Patrick Gray, of notorious Watergate fame. I have read published reports that G.Robert Blakey had previous legal associations not only with Louis Nizer, the Warren Report preface writer, but also with Moe Dalitz who is reputed to be the Head of the Syndicate in Cleveland. Carl Oglesby reminds us that a Dalitz associate's name was discovered in Jack Ruby's address book. If true, what a mess!

Maybe much of what I have written will be easily dismissed when the HSCA Final Report is published, but I seriously doubt it. I hope that they will make everything available to those of us concerned, but I doubt that too. There is something quite twisted in the fact that we have to pay out money to purchase reports and documents which show that we have been diddled with again. I have little faith that much will be accomplished by the Justice Department and the FBI with the material which ends up in their hands. After all, they are part of the disease, not the cure! Justice Department spokesmen have already expressed publicly their lack of desire to pursue the case. Thus the killers and those who covered up can smile once again, as if they had ever stopped smiling.

However, one good thing came out of all of this. The old rogues are retiring or dying off, or in some cases, being picked off. Their replacements are filing in. At least we will know who the new creeps are to whom we will need to devote our attention.

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